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## THE TURPINS OF THE ANTIPODES.

A LATE Australian mail reports 'that a gold escort, on its way from the Lachlan to Sydney, was attacked on the 15th of June by a desperado named Gardiner and twelve of his companions. They fired on the troopers, disabled them, and carried off about fourteen thousand pounds' worth of gold. They were hotly pursued, and one pack-horse with fifteen hundred ounces of the plundered gold captured.' Such an affair as this would doubtless make a great noise in civilised England; but they manage things differently at the antipodes, and long before this, the above-mentioned 'sticking up' of the gold escort has ceased to be talked of. In fact, ever since the Lambing-flat diggings opened in January 1861, highway robberies have been an ordinary incident on the great Southern Road; and perhaps a short account of the most notorious of these 'minions of the moon,' including the gentleman who led the attack on the escort (Gardiner), may not be unacceptable to those who live at home in peace, and can go out for a walk without carrying a revolver in each pocket, and a bowie up the sleeve.

The snow fell heavily, and lodged to the depth of twenty feet on the Snowy River diggings from the end of July 1860. The greater portion of the diggers had left previously, and those who wintered there suffered great hardships from the scarcity of fuel and provisions. In the November of that year, the Lambing-flat was spoken highly of, and thousands flocked to it from all quarters. Great numbers came over from the Victorian side, and amongst these, crowds of old convicts, who had originally been expatriated to Van Diemen's Land, and who, since the term of their original sentences had expired, had been prosecuting their callings, in the various branches of robbery, on the Melbourne gold-fields. These men always herded together; they had their peculiar code of signals, and a dialect by which they could at once recognise one of the initiated, and they actually took possession of many of the back gullies, one of which, in particular, was called Blackguard Gully. They were ostensibly engaged in digging, but in reality they lived by plunder; and in a very short time grog-shops, sparring saloons, and ten-pin alleys were established by them in all directions. At last, in February 1861, the first disturbance with the Chinese took place; and the honest diggers thought that when they had

driven off the Chinamen, they might as well make a clean job of it, and drive off the thieves as well. The very morning they started on this expedition, two of the Irish diggers were found lying near the entrance to Blackguard Gully with their skulls fearfully mangled from repeated blows of bludgeons; they, however, still breathed, and ultimately recovered. Of course, this sight excited still greater indignation amongst the diggers, and they rushed at once to a thieves' lodging-tent about half a mile up the gully, and in this they found two men whose clothes were covered with fresh stains of blood. The diggers at once took charge of every one they found in the tent; they then set it on fire, and stood by until everything in it was totally consumed. They then went on to the next shanty, as these haunts were called, and did the same to it, and so on right round the diggings, apprehending the most notorious of the flash characters, warning off the others, and burning down all their tents. The prisoners whom they had taken were delivered over to the police, and were sentenced on the following day by the bench of magistrates to various terms of imprisonment, as rogues and vagabonds. These measures frightened the thieves away from the main diggings, and they spread out over the branch creeks and gullies. From that period commenced the regular highway robberies.

The first notorious band consisted of five men, well mounted and armed; these flourished for about three months, and defied all the efforts of the troopers to capture them. After that space of time, they found the country round the diggings was getting too hot for them, so they shifted the scene of their operations to the Lachlan River, where the gold-field has since been discovered, though at that time no such thing had been thought of there. They opened the campaign in their new district by riding up to the inn at Jemalong, taking possession of it, and securing all the arms, money, and jewellery which they could find in the house. They then sat down to dinner, drank what liquors they chose, and went out to smoke under the veranda. While they were thus employed, a stockman came up driving a mob of horses, and as he passed the front of the inn, one of the robbers levelled his piece, and called out to him to 'bail up.' Instead of obeying this order by reining in his horse, the stockman dug the spurs in rowel-deep, and galloped on; the robber fired both barrels

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of his gun after him, and slightly wounded him in the shoulder; but still he kept his seat, and was out of range in a moment. This man's escape rather startled the gang, and they immediately mounted their horses, and rode away. In the meantime, the stockman pushed on for the nearest station, which he reached after a ride of twenty-six miles. There was a general muster for branding, &c., there, at which all the neighbouring bushmen were assembled, and the next morning, at sunrise, fourteen men, mounted and armed, started in pursuit of the gang. These stockmen knew every inch of the country for some hundreds of miles around, and they very soon struck the track of the robbers' horses; this they followed for several miles, and then they found, by the hoof-marks, that the robbers had caught and mounted fresh horses that very morning. This circumstance, however, did not discourage the pursuers, for they had got on the track, and they knew they could run it to the end even for a thousand miles, provided it kept clear of populous towns. They camped just before nightfall, and at daylight started on. They soon saw that the robbers did not know the 'lay' of the country; and so, whilst one stuck to the track, the others opened out so as to be just in sight of each other. In this manner they rode on till about two o'clock, when one of them, who was a few hundred yards in advance, suddenly pulled up, and waved his hat to the others. These closed up at once, and peeping cautiously over a hill-top, they saw the five men they wanted, halted in a group about half a mile away on the plain. The pursuers stopped also for a few minutes to breathe their horses, and then putting in the persuaders (spurs), they galloped full speed right at the gang. The latter named gentry hesitated for an instant whether to fight or flee; but the stock-lads came on like lightning, so the robbers turned tail, and fled in different directions. Unfortunately for some of them, horsemanship was not one of their accomplishments; so before the chase had lasted for more than a couple of miles, two of the gang were thrown from their horses, and were immediately secured. The other three escaped for that time; but the two who were captured were tried, convicted, and sentenced to ten years' hard labour on the roads.

The next man who distinguished himself in this line was 'Jack-in-the-boots.' He had been sent to Cockatoo Island (the penal establishment of New South Wales), under a sentence of ten years; and on the occasion of a serious disturbance there, thirty of the ringleaders were sent in irons to Darlinghurst jail. Jack was one of these; and on a certain day, whilst in the exercising-yard, and under the very eyes of two warders, the prisoners contrived to get out two or three stones from the main wall, and were coolly walking out. The governor of the jail happened to be passing by, and he was thunder-struck at beholding the men in gray suits and irons at large. Of course, the alarm was given at once. Seventeen prisoners had escaped; but they were all retaken almost immediately, with the exception of Jack-in-the-boots. It chanced that a gentleman, who was visiting at a house in the vicinity of the jail, had left his horse fastened to a gate-post, so Jack jumped on it, and disappeared. In a few days after this, two Jews who were hawking jewellery about on the Tumut (about 300 miles from Sydney) were stopped and robbed. Then every day came news of fresh robberies; the mail was stopped, and several stores and public-houses plundered by the same man, who from a peculiarly rough voice was identified as Jack, until nothing was talked of in the Southern district but Jack-in-the-boots and his exploits. At last, however, his race was run; a large reward had been offered for his apprehension, and he was taken by some bullock-drivers whom he had plundered. He was tried at Gundagai, in the latter

part of last year, convicted, and sent down to his old quarters for eight years longer.

After him, 'Dido' and his party plundered every one who straggled away from the main diggings; so that it was dangerous even to go and look for a horse unless there were three or four in company, and with arms in their hands. This, however, continued for only a few weeks, for there was a great land-sale to be held at Burrows (about seventy miles off), and the gang started off in that direction, in the expectation of getting some large sums of money from those who were intending to purchase land there. However, they were too late, and their intended prey escaped them; so, by way of consolation for this disappointment, they stopped and plundered every one they met on the road until they reached Bowring, the township next to Yaas on the Southern Road. They took charge of the inn there, plundered it, and then sat down to enjoy themselves. The assizes were just being held up-country, and, as one of the district judges and the crown prosecutor were riding along the Yaas Road, the bushrangers gave chase to them; but the legal gentlemen were well mounted, so they galloped on into Yaas, and informed the police there. The troopers mounted in hot haste; but before they got to Bowring, Dido and his friends had got so very drunk, that the constables had only the trouble of lifting them up and conveying them to jail. This party was also convicted, and sentenced to ten years on the roads.

Meanwhile, to the westward, Peazley and Gardiner kept the police in constant employment. They had a haunt amongst the mountains, and made constant descents on all the roads near Bathurst. Peazley, especially, had a celebrated black blood-mare, and used to laugh at all the attempts of the troopers to capture him. At length, information was received as to the exact locality of his retreat, and two troopers started from Bathurst to effect his capture. They found out the hut just as it had been described to them, and they quietly dismounted; then, with revolvers in their hands, they crept up to the door. It happened that Peazley was away, and Gardiner was alone in the hut. He heard their footsteps, and as they rushed in at the front door, he jumped into a back room. The troopers fired, and Gardiner returned shot for shot from his den, until his revolvers were emptied; then out he sprang, and made for the door, but he was met with two shots, both of which took effect, and down he went. The police then handcuffed him, and whilst one kept guard, the other went out and saddled Gardiner's horse. They then lifted him into the saddle, fastened his feet to the stirrups, and placing him between them, started for Bathurst. They were riding comfortably along, when Jack Peazley galloped up; the troopers fired on him immediately, and the next instant both of their saddles were emptied by two shots from Peazley's revolver. The reunited bushrangers then rode away. Neither of the troopers were killed, though one of them had a ball lodged in his forehead—he was fortunately an Irishman, and had a pretty thick *os frontis*—and after this, nothing was heard of Gardiner for some months. This was not the case with Peazley, for he shifted his camp to the Abercrombie Mountains, where a sister of his lived, and he was frequently seen in that quarter. A letter, purporting to be from him, appeared in one of the Bathurst papers, in which he said 'that he loved his native hills [he was an Australian], and that he never would be taken alive.' A reward of one hundred and seventy pounds was offered for his apprehension, accompanied with a full description of his person, and a statement that 'he had been seen in Sydney a short time previously.' Of course, all the Southern patrol and police constables professed to be constantly searching for him; but they could never encounter him, although many bushmen saw him daily. His haunts and habits were well

known to several in the Abercrombie ranges, but as he had injured no one but the police, and never robbed a poor man, no one in that neighbourhood would betray him.

One day, however, he was drinking with two small farmers (whose brother was in the patrol), and a quarrel arose between them. The next day, news was sent into Goulburn that Peazley had shot them both. Of course, he was at once denounced as a murderer; but as it was allowed that it was with their own gun, and in a scuffle, the general opinion was that they had attempted some treachery against him. At all events, the entire available police force was sent out in search of him, and for a long time without effect.

At last, however, a telegram was received from Gundagai announcing his capture, which had taken place in the following manner. He had considered it dangerous to remain in the Abercrombie ranges any longer, so he had taken a pack-horse with him, and set out with the intention of going over into Victoria. He passed the Murrumbidgee river at the Mundarlo Inn; but on his road from thence to the Tarcotta Creek, he was met by one of the mounted troopers, who, after exchanging a few words with him, suddenly challenged him by name. Peazley at once let go the bridle of the horse which he was leading, and went off at full speed. The trooper pursued him and fired his pistol at him; it had one barrel only, and, seeing that Peazley was getting out his revolver, the other relinquished the chase, and went in search of further assistance. Peazley then rode back by the same road which he had travelled in the early part of the day; and on arriving at the Mundarlo Inn, he dismounted there. He walked into the bar, and had some liquor; and on some of those who were present asking him if he had not passed in the morning leading a second horse, he replied that he had; 'but as it had broken away from him, he intended to stop that night at Mundarlo, and go in search of it in the morning.' He then remained lounging about the bar and tap-room. There happened to be at the inn on that day the overseer of a neighbouring cattle-station, and his suspicions as to Peazley's identity were aroused; accordingly, he closely observed his demeanour, and whilst standing at a window, overheard some expressions of Peazley's which made him almost sure of his man. He therefore rode away to the nearest police-station, whence he procured a pair of handcuffs, and where his previous suspicions were changed into certainty by hearing of Peazley's morning encounter with the trooper. He then returned to Mundarlo, and communicated his design to the landlord, and they arranged between them the plan of operation to be pursued. In accordance with this, when supper was placed on the table, Peazley was invited to sit down; he did so, and called for some bottled ale and porter. The landlord came himself to supply these to him, and as he stood behind Peazley's chair, he suddenly seized both his arms; others sprang instantly to his assistance, and in a moment Peazley was securely handcuffed. He struggled desperately at first, but they secured his legs with a heavy bullock-chain, put him into a cart, and drove at once into Gundagai, where he was secured in the jail. From thence, he was forwarded to Bathurst for trial, and—though he made a daring attempt to escape from his escort—most probably before this he has suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

Shortly after Peazley's capture, Gardiner was again heard of: he had pitched on the Levels and the Wedding Mountains as his head-quarters, and from thence he made excursions to the Lambing-flat gold-field. Gardiner, like Peazley, never molested the bush or stock men, and for that reason he was able to defy all the efforts which the troopers made to apprehend him. In the beginning of 1862, an innkeeper on Lambing-flat boasted 'that he

by himself could take Gardiner, if he could only meet with him.' Some days after he had said this, he was out in the bush, when suddenly Gardiner rode up to him; a revolver was pointed at his head, and he was compelled to surrender his arms and his money. Gardiner was about taking his saddle also, but he begged hard to retain it; so Gardiner consented that he should do so on payment of ten pounds; accordingly, they rode side by side to a neighbouring station, where the innkeeper borrowed that amount, and handed it over to Gardiner, who then wished him good-morning, and rode off. About two hours subsequent to this, two of the mounted patrol came up, and on being informed of what had occurred, they, together with the innkeeper, started on Gardiner's track. After riding about twenty miles, they reached another station, and there they saw Gardiner's horse fastened to the two-rail fence which enclosed the home-paddock. One of the troopers remained to watch this, whilst the other, in company with the innkeeper, proceeded in search of its owner. In a short time they perceived Gardiner in the paddock; when he saw them, he turned to run, and they ran after him, firing as fast as they could discharge their weapons. When Gardiner found that these were all emptied, he doubled back, and made a sudden rush to where his horse was fastened. He presented his revolver at the constable who was guarding it, and called out 'that if he (the constable) did not hold up his hands, he would blow his brains out.' The trooper, taken by surprise, did as he was ordered, and Gardiner jumped on his horse, and rode away laughing. This was the last exploit of Gardiner's which I heard of, previous to my departure from New South Wales; and it is difficult to say whether his next appearance on the stage may be, as now, in the character of a daring freebooter, or as a convicted and doomed felon. However this may be, at least these rough notes may enable some of the good folks here at home to perceive that an Australian adventurer, besides enduring the inevitable hardships of a gold-digger's life, is constantly liable to be deprived of his hard-earned gold by the hand of the Bushrangers.

#### JOHN WILSON OF ELLERAY.

OF the many Wilsons whom fame delights to honour, and whose memory the present generation at least will not willingly let die, Professor John Wilson of Elleray, better known by his *nom-de-plume* of Christopher North, is by far the most remarkable. A pleasing poet, an agreeable story-teller, a brilliant essayist, an enthusiastic critic, and a most eloquent Priest of Nature, are not often found in the same pair of shoes; and when, in addition, the owner thereof is a noted athlete, has a reputation for game-cocks, and is the best amateur pedestrian, and by no means the worst Moral Philosopher of his day, the wonder is the greater.

It is true that in most of these accomplishments, 'the Professor' was outdone by somebody else, whose *spécialité* lay in that direction, but this is only so much as must be confessed of the Admirable Crichton. There are some few individuals who are many-sided by nature—polyhedral-minded men, who, great in everything, are yet not born to be the fathers of any particular science or art. They make the greatest possible impression, while they live, upon all who come ever so indirectly within their personal influence, or even within hearsay of them; but they leave no enduring monument behind them. From no single one, nor even from the whole collection of their written works, can their character be gathered. Some persons have a fancy for building their house in the most composite style—Gothic, Elizabethan, Italian, Crystal-Palatial, Swiss-cottage, and Alham-



brian, all in one. Plenty of specimens of these are to be found in the neighbourhood of London; and if one were pulled to pieces—for the sake of our metaphor—and its component parts sent to some analytical architect, he would find precisely the same difficulty in pronouncing on the general effect, as a student of men would find who should be given the *Isle of Palms*, the *Noctes*, *Homer and his Translators*, and *The Trials of Margaret Lyndsay*, as keys to discover Professor Wilson. It is more necessary that the biography of a man of this kind should be written, than even of a greater man, whose writings acquaint us with himself, and we welcome therefore the volumes \* lately published by Mrs Gordon very gladly. It is generally held that a near relative must needs make but a bad biographer, but this cannot be said in the present case.

Mrs Gordon has performed her difficult task with great propriety and judgment. A mere disciple and admirer of the subject of this memoir must have written a eulogy, and a political antagonist would have composed something very like a libel. For Professor John Wilson was a man of strife; he trailed his coat behind him for forty years, entreating his enemies to oblige him by putting so much as the tips of their toes upon it; and when he could tempt nobody to a breach of the peace, he plunged into the peaceful crowd, hitting right and left. He was always imagining that people were biting their thumbs at either him or his principles. He delighted in attributing all sorts of wickedness to the most innocent people, whose opinions happened to be antagonistic to his own. 'There was a fish, and it was a deil o' a fish, and it was ill to its young anes,' was his first sermon preached at five years old. He confesses to a love for raids and bloodshed even in his childhood. 'A tug—a tug! With face ten times flushed and pale by turns ere you could count ten, he at last has strength in the agitation of his fear and joy to pull away at the monster. And there he lies in his beauty among the gowans and the green-sward, for he has whipped him right over his head and far away, a fish a quarter of an ounce in weight, and at the very least two inches long. Off he flies on wings of wind to his father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and cousins, and all the neighbourhood, holding the fish aloft in both hands, till fearful of its escape, and like a genuine child of corruption, his eyes brighten at the first blush of cold blood on his small tiny fingers. He carries about with him, up-stairs and down-stairs, his prey upon a plate; he will not wash his hands before dinner, for he exults in the silver scales adhering to the thumb-nail that scooped the pin out of the baggy's maw; and at night, "cabined, cribbed, confined," he is overheard murmuring in his sleep—a thief, a robber, and a murderer in his yet infant dreams!'

From the cradle to the grave, John Wilson seems to have done pretty much as he liked—to have been his own master. He was conscious, and more than conscious, of his own great mental powers, and he was also in excellent social circumstances. Upon this latter fact depends a great deal, even in the case of men of genius; it gives them confidence and independence, and undoubtedly strengthens their literary position from the first. At seventeen years of age, our author addresses a patronising and eulogistic letter nine pages long to William Wordsworth. The poet is unknown to him, but his young soul ardently recognises the true Interpreter of nature, of whom the world was at that time in ignorance. De Quincy, it may be remembered, did precisely the same. And yet how different was the behaviour of these two young men. The latter,

lost in spiritual admiration, worships the god of his idolatry from afar; the former pats him on the back, and bids him go in and win. It is very vulgar, of course, to ascribe the self-confidence of a great man in any degree to his early possession of wealth, but like many other vulgar remarks, it is essentially a true one. At an early age—while an undergraduate at Magdalen College, Oxford—Wilson found himself in possession of fifty thousand pounds. He combined there many of the characteristics of the fast and the reading man. He was a steady, and even methodical student, making himself acquainted with all subjects, and an especial master of Greek; and he was also much given up to boxing and cock-fighting. 'One of his great amusements was to go to the *Angel Inn* about midnight, when many of the up-and-down London coaches met; there he used to preside at the passengers' supper-table, carving for them, and inquiring about their respective journeys, and in return, astonishing them with his wit and pleasantry, and sending them off wondering who and what he could be. He frequently went from the *Angel* to the *Fox and Goose*, an early purl and gill house, where he found the coachmen and guards, &c., preparing for the coaches which had left London late at night; and there again he found an audience, and sometimes remained till the college gates were opened rather than rouse the old porter, Peter, from his bed to open for him expressly.' . . . His pedestrian feats were marvellous. On one occasion, having been absent a day or two, we asked him on his return to the common room, where he had been. He said in London. "When did you return?"—"This morning." "How did you come?"—"On foot." As we all expressed surprise, he said: "Why, the fact is, I dined yesterday with a friend in Grosvenor (I think it was) Square, and as I quitted the house, a fellow who was passing was impertinent, and insulted me, upon which I knocked him down; and as I did not choose to have myself called in question for a street-row, I at once started as I was, in my dinner dress, and never stopped until I got to the college gate this morning, as it was being opened." Now this was a walk of fifty-eight miles, at least, which he must have got over in eight or nine hours at most, supposing him to have left the dinner-party at nine in the evening. Later in life (in 1844), he walked seventy miles, to be present at a Burns' festival; and once, when disappointed in the mail from Penrith to Kendal, he gave his coat to the driver, set off on foot, reached Kendal some time before the coach, and then trudged on to Elleray.

Verily, he rejoiced as a giant in his strength, both intellectual and physical. In that vigorous, prosperous youth of his, he met but one cross—the precise nature of which is not explained to us. He loved, however, and was loved again, and yet there was some insuperable obstacle to his marriage. He seems to have given the matter up out of deference to his family. 'I know enough now,' he writes, 'to know that my mother would die if this happened.' And again: 'This I know, that were I to go, I could not bear to look on my mother's face, a feeling which must not be mine.' His spirits were long in recovering from this shock, for notwithstanding much written evidence to the contrary, Wilson was a very sensitive and tender-hearted man.

His passionate love for nature prompted him to fix his home at Elleray, on Lake Windermere, in the neighbourhood of Wordsworth and De Quincy, kindred spirits in some respects, but certainly not in others. The latter, for instance, writes, with undisguised astonishment, of his friend's love for bull-hunting by night. 'Represent to yourself the earliest dawn of a fine summer's morning, time about half-past two o'clock. A young man, anxious for an introduction

\* Christopher North, compiled from *Family Papers and other Sources*, by his daughter, Mrs Gordon. Edmonston and Douglas.

\* He was, of course, a Master of Arts, and not answerable to college-discipline by this time.

to Mr Wilson, and as yet pretty nearly a stranger to the country, has taken up his abode in Grasmere, and has strolled out at this early hour to that rocky and moorish common, called "the White Moss," which overhangs the Vale of Rydal, dividing it from Grasmere. Looking southwards, in the direction of Rydal, suddenly he became aware of a large beast, advancing at a long trot, with the heavy and thundering tread of the hippopotamus, along the public road. The creature is soon arrived within half a mile of his station; and by the gray light of morning, is at length made out to be a bull, apparently fleeing from some unseen enemy in his rear. As yet, however, all is mystery; but suddenly three horsemen double a turn in the road, and come fleeing into sight with the speed of a hurricane, manifestly in pursuit of the fugitive bull; the bull labours to navigate his huge bulk to the moor, which he reaches, and then pauses, panting and blowing out clouds of smoke from his nostrils, to look back from his station amongst rocks and slippery crags upon his hunters. If he conceived that the rockiness of the ground had secured his repose, the foolish animal is soon undeceived; the horsemen, scarcely relaxing their speed, charge up the hill, and speedily gaining the rear of the bull, drive him at a gallop over the worst part of that impracticable ground down into the level ground below. At this point of time the stranger perceives, by the increasing light of the morning, that the hunters are armed with immense spears fourteen feet long. With these the bull is soon dislodged, and scouring down to the plain below, he, and the hunters at his tail, take to the common at the head of the lake, and all, in the madness of the chase, are soon half engulfed in the swamps of the morass. After plunging together for ten or fifteen minutes, all suddenly regain the *terra firma*, and the bull again makes for the rocks. Up to this moment, there had been the silence of ghosts, and the stranger had doubted whether the spectacle were not a pageant of aerial spectres, ghostly huntsmen, ghostly lances, and a ghostly bull. But just at this crisis a voice—it was the voice of Mr Wilson—shouted aloud: "Turn the villain; turn that villain, or he will take to Cumberland." The young stranger did the service required of him; the villain was turned, and fled southwards, the hunters, lance in rest, rushed after him; all bowed their thanks as they fled past; the fleet cavalcade again took the high-road; they doubled the cape which shut them out of sight; and in a moment all had disappeared, and left the quiet valley to its original silence.

Even more than playing the Torridor, however, did John Wilson delight in water-pastimes. He swam across Rydal Lake to cool his horse. He kept a whole fleet of his own on Windermere, consisting of eight sailing-vessels, besides a fine ten-oared Oxford barge, called *Nil Timeo*. An angling-party of no less than two-and-thirty persons (including Wordsworth and De Quincey) that he carried with him into the wilds of Wastwater, and there maintained in tents, is still talked of in those regions. With the 'statesmen' of Cumberland and Westmoreland, Wilson's name is a household word (as is that of Hartley Coleridge also), while Wordsworth is unknown, or known only as 'the stamp-master'; 'a genial, open-hearted human creature, and with nothing like pride about him,' say they, was Christopher in his Sporting Jacket, and we can well believe it. The chances are many to one against a man of this kind getting a suitable wife; but John Wilson had his usual good-luck even in this respect. The beautiful lady whom he married seems to have been peculiarly adapted for a person of his singular habits; a fine-hearted and true woman, who, when her husband loses all he is possessed of through the fraud of a relative, does not go into hysterics, but packs up the trunks, and departs from beautiful Elleray (to revisit it, however, it is now pleasant to think, again and again), prepared to

live for the rest of her days in her mother-in-law's house in Edinburgh.

She made a pedestrian tour in her husband's company in the Western Highlands of Scotland for two months, walking sometimes as much as five-and-twenty miles a day, and that district, be it remembered, was a very different one from the tourist-haunted, inn-abounding locality which it now is. On their way to Glenorchy, they passed a little thatched cottage close by the falls of the Aray. 'The spot was beautiful; the weather had been wet, and the river rushed along its rocky bed with a fulness that was promising to the angler. It was too attractive to be passed, so they lingered, stopped, and waited for ten days or a fortnight, taking up their quarters at the cottage, and living on the easiest terms with its inmates. It is yet told how, on a Sabbath morning, the daughter who served came into the room, the only one, where Mr and Mrs Wilson slept, and after adjusting her dress at the little mirror, hanging by a nail on the unmortared wall, she was unable to hook her gown behind, but went at once to the side of the bed, from which they had not yet risen, saying: "Do help me to hook my gown." Mr Wilson sat up in bed, and served her with the utmost good-nature.' On another occasion the travellers had been overtaken by a sudden mist in Rannoch. 'They missed the beaten track of road, and getting among dreary moors, were long before they discovered footing that could lead them to a habitation. My father made his wife sit down among the moss, and taking off his coat, wrapped her in it, saying he would try and find the road, assuring her at the same time he would not go beyond the reach of her voice. They could not see a foot before them so dense and dreary was the dreary mist that lay all round. Kissing his wife, and telling her not to fear, he sprang up from where she sat, and bounded off. Not many seconds of time elapsed ere he called her to come to him, the sound guiding her to where he stood. He was upon the road; his foot had suddenly gained the right path, for light there was none. He told her he had never felt so grateful for anything in his life as for that unexpected discovery of the beaten track.' On their return to civilisation, the pair were quite the lions of Edinburgh, and the lady was allowed to have come back 'bonnier than ever.' The walks which Mr Wilson takes alone are of the most tremendous description, and are full of adventure of all kinds, whereof the most frequent are the pugilistic; 'circumstances led to Mr Wilson's putting off his coat and giving this fellow a thrashing, &c.' Even after he was made Professor of Moral Philosophy, he would now and then break out again in the fisticuff direction in spite of himself. The attainment of this professorship sounds to English ears a most astonishing business. One of his testimonials as a candidate was written by a lady—a Mrs Grant—and evidences to the rectitude of his domestic character! The election entirely resolved itself into a question of Whig and Tory, and was carried on with an amount of scurrility on both sides that would disgrace the *London Satirist*.

It must be confessed, however, that in this matter John Wilson had brought the difficulty upon himself. In the then infant pages of *Blackwood*, he had written of a full score of Edinburgh respectabilities in a way that was past forgiveness. The pre-eminence in literature in the Scottish capital—apart from the names of Scott and Henry Mackenzie—lay with Mr Jeffrey and others connected with the *Edinburgh Review*, all of them Whigs. They formed a brilliant circle; but shut in amongst themselves for years by Tory antipathy, they had acquired habits somewhat exclusive. John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart, two young men of the highest talent, starting together at the bar about 1816, found themselves but coldly received by the Edinburgh Whig notabilities, Mr Jeffrey himself, however, standing somewhat in exception, for he

accepted an article for the *Review* from Wilson, and wrote to him in a very friendly style. The pique thus engendered, assisted by a native leaning to Conservatism, sent both of these young men into a course of party action, not only antagonistic to Whig politics, but charged with personal spite at every person who professed liberal views. They found a vehicle to their mind in *Blackwood's Magazine*; and for a few years, a very unscrupulous warfare, which nobody can now look upon without condemnation, was carried on. There was, however, a great difference between the two chief combatants. What Lockhart was, need not be particularised; but of Wilson, it may be asserted that, however indefensible many of his writings were, his was not a heart either cold to friendship or which naturally cherished malice. All his fury against Cockney poets, and liberals in general, was never more than half real, or anything more than an ebullition of reckless animal spirits.

Still we cannot say that the early writings of Wilson in *Blackwood* were to be defended. The recklessness was itself a great fault. Even *Ebony*, as the elder Mr Blackwood was called, would sometimes decline to print his articles, and he was not a particular editor, by any means. 'When I first read your terrible scraping of —, I enjoyed it excessively,' writes he; 'but now that one can look at the article coolly, there are such coarseness and personal things in it as one would not like to hear it said that you were the author of.' Leigh Hunt—one of the purest-minded and most affectionate men that ever breathed—was designated by Wilson as 'a profligate creature, without reverence either for God or man;' a statement that would be shocking but for its glaring and malicious falsehood. He afterwards made up for it by a most generous praise. There is also a want of delicacy where his own works are concerned, which one would not have expected in him. Upon hearing that De Quincey is about to write a critique upon his writings, he writes to suggest what should be said. 'If you think the *Isle of Palms* and the *City of the Plague* original poems (in design), and unborrowed and unsuggested, I hope you will say so. The *Plague* has been often touched on and alluded to, but never, that I know of, was made the subject of a poem, old Withers (the *City Remembrancer*) excepted, and some drivelling of Taylor the Water-poet. Defoe's fictitious prose narrative I had never read, except an extract or two in Britton's *Beauties of England*. If you think me a good private character, do say so; and if in my house there be one who sheds a quiet light, perhaps a beautiful niche may be given to that clear luminary. Base brutes have labelled my personal character. Coming from you, the truth told, without reference to their malignity, will make me and others more happy than any kind expression you may use regarding my genius or talents. In the *Lights and Shadows*, *Margaret Lyndsay*, *The Foresters*, and many articles in *Blackwood*, I have wished to speak of humble life, and the elementary feelings of the human soul in isolation, under the light of a veil of poetry. Have I done so? Pathos, a sense of the beautiful, and humour, I think I possess. Do I? In the *City of the Plague* there ought to be something of the sublime. Is there?'

One of Wilson's chief accusations against Leigh Hunt was that he had 'pestered Hazlitt to review his *Rimini* in the *Edinburgh*,' an action which the fastidious author of the *Indicator* would have cut his own right hand off rather than commit.

Neither he nor Lockhart liked personalities, however true, when directed against themselves, as we gather from their eager anxiety to catch, and shoot, the anonymous author of *Hypocrisy Unveiled*. Let us quit, however, this sad subject. It largely proves the overwhelming genius of John Wilson, that we admire and honour him still in spite of these things. The memoir of his life is like a beautiful road with

an unhealthy bog in the middle of it; we are delighted with the commencement of our journey; while we are in the slough, we regret that we ever started; and presently the way gets firm again, and the view opens, and the glorious mountain breeze sweeps all remembrance of the evil spot away, and we are glad indeed that we did not turn back discouraged.

The Professorship was just what Wilson wanted. He had ballast and cargo and sail, as he asserted of himself, but he was in great lack of an anchor. It steadied him at once, and that in the best sense of the word. Without losing his unaffected and open ways, he began to feel that he had responsibilities, and to act upon them. He still dearly loved 'a lark,' but he ceased to indulge in it at the expense of others. He was hospitable and kind, of course, as ever. De Quincey comes to dine with him one night, and stays the greater part of a year. During this protracted visit, 'some of his eccentricities did not escape observation. For example, he rarely appeared at the family meals, preferring to dine in his own room at his own hour, not unfrequently turning night into day. His tastes were very simple, though a little troublesome, at least to the servant who prepared his repast. Coffee, boiled rice and milk, and a piece of mutton from the loin, were the materials that invariably formed his diet. The cook, who had an audience with him daily, received her instructions in silent awe, quite overpowered by his manner; for, had he been addressing a duchess, he could scarcely have spoken with more deference. He would couch his request in such terms as these: "Owing to dyspepsia afflicting my system, and the possibility of any additional disarrangement of the stomach taking place, consequences incalculably distressing would arise; so much so, indeed, as to increase nervous irritation, and prevent me from attending to matters of overwhelming importance, if you do not remember to cut the mutton in a diagonal rather than in a longitudinal form."'

The love of John Wilson for his wife was true and tender indeed. It touches honest eyes with tears to read of it. When she dies, his great heart seems to dissolve within him. He would sometimes break down during his lectures at any allusion to death and love, and hide his face in his hands. On meeting his class for the first time after his bereavement, he was unable to give utterance to words. After a short pause, and in a voice tremulous with emotion, he said: 'Gentlemen, pardon me; but since we last met, I have been in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.' He wrote well and often afterwards, but most things from his pen were henceforth tinged with melancholy. His political rancour abated, and then died out. He once more met Jeffrey (whose conduct towards him seems to have been always that of a gentleman) and many other wicked Whigs, and renewed his long disconnected friendship with them. One of the latest acts of his life was to drive in from Dalkeith to Edinburgh, in order to record his vote for Macaulay. The last days of the great Professor are almost as touching as those of Sir Walter Scott.

We read in these volumes, that after the Reform Bill was passed, 'the only comfort' of a certain lady-partisan of Wilson's faction, 'was that she had lived in the times of the Georges.' But for that unhappy fact in the case of the Professor himself, we believe that we should have had little to blame in him. The violence and vulgarity of party-warfare in those times were such as we of the present day can scarcely conceive. Periodical literature was in its infancy, and highly spiced articles were necessary to procure a circulation. These articles, too, had to be furnished red-hot from the brain, at the shortest notice. *Maga* seems to have existed from hand to mouth, in a fashion that would now be truly astonishing in any magazine. It had no reliable contributors whatever



except Wilson. He sometimes wrote half the number himself. 'Nobody writes for the magazine,' says he, so late as 1834. 'What is to become of next magazine, I do not know.'

All these things should be taken into consideration when we would pass judgment upon Christopher North. The evil that he did does not live after him; the good is not interred with his bones. His faults were mainly those of his time and circumstances, while his great and varied merits were his own.

## MARGARET.

### IN SIX CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

SHE was alone now! It was the day after the wedding; not much more than a year after the last burying. Margaret Woodford was quite alone now: the last of her kin, her own little sister, had left her yesterday, for a new life and a new home; all the rest had left her, one by one, at short intervals, for the churchyard.

Yesterday had been a bustling day; this morning she was weary: it was no matter, she had nothing to do but to rest—there was no one to work for, care for, think for; no one to scold or to caress: as it was to-day, so it would probably be through all the days of her life, and she was not old yet.

As Margaret sat in the sunny window of the little breakfast-parlour—the only small room in the old rambling house—the eyes that seemed to look at outward things were almost sightless, vision was drawn inward: she thought she did wisely in striving to grow familiar with the future: we often fancy ourselves wisest when we are only saddest, least hopeful, least faithful, most foolish.

The spring was fair and forward, and the April morning, in its quiet warmth, seemed more like one of early summer. The orchards that lay between the garden and the meadows were in bloom; in the copses, on the hillside, the larches had long been green, the silver poplars were in leaf; the sun glistened brightly on the still bare boughs and swelling buds of ash, beech, oak, and hazel, giving a twinkling sheen to all wooded places. They were many. Some hundred years ago, there had been nothing but forest where fair meadows now sloped towards the river, and on the uplands where now lay the harvest-fields. Groups of noble trees, towering here and there above dense underwood, testified to what had been. The shallow spot in the river was still called the Wood Ford, though the woodman's axe had laid it open to the sun fifty years before. Spring at Sunny-slope was rich in wild-flowers; primroses studded every bank, the ridges in every steep meadow; the hedges were blue with scented violets; cowslips, in close neighbourhood, nodded to each other in the fields, of which the butter-cups had not yet taken possession; wood anemones, wild hyacinths, golden kingcups, and the early purple orchis, clustered in every dell and dingle.

The scene overlooked by the window in which Miss Woodford sat was lovely, and of a Sabbath-like quietness. None of its sweetness, or beauty, was in the face that gazed upon it: an expression too sullen and heavy to be simply mournful; an ashen sallowness of complexion, telling of 'sad and stagnant blood'; inky shadows beneath the eyes, too black to be merely cast by long dark lashes, made the face absolutely plain, in spite of its delicate features.

The Manor House crowned a gentle eminence, overlooking valley, wood, and water; the church stood close beside it. The only sounds that reached Miss Woodford, save the singing of birds and of the brook hurrying to the river, freighted with snow-white and pinky petals from the orchard, were from the Great Farm, half a mile distant. It was the clang of the noonday bell at the Great Farm that at length

roused Margaret from her sombre musing; she rose, gave a dreary look round the room, over the sun-steeped landscape, at the unclouded sky, then said aloud:

'Only mid-day! What shall I do all the afternoon and evening of this day, of every day, of my whole life—they will be all alike—no pain, no pleasure, no care or joy, or hope or happiness! I wish I were old—very old—I should not mind then!'

The words sounded the more dreary for being quietly spoken, without any passion; the face looked the more dreary for the beauty of its large dark-gray eyes.

Conscious that she was cold, Margaret went into the garden. She paced up and down a turf-path, bordered by straggling nut-bushes, which met overhead, but, being bare, did not keep off the sun. It poured down upon the uncovered brown hair, at which the nut-bushes clutched now and then. She was faint and giddy when, at her usual dining-hour, she was called into the house. She took her place, glancing at the vacant one opposite her as she did so, drank a glass of water, and tried to eat. Then, when all was cleared away, and the servant had left the room, she still sat at the table, supporting her head on her hand, and gazed out as she had done in the morning. She started, when, by and by, the comb slipped from her loosened hair, and fell to the ground. Neatness was habitual enough to be mechanical; the luxuriant hair uncoiled itself; she went upstairs to arrange it afresh.

She had to pass the open door of the room that had been her sister's; she paused, and went in. It had not yet been put in order. She wandered round it, looking at and touching this and that. She took up the flowers her sister had worn yesterday, and smelt them; they were still fragrant. She lifted up a tiny glove from the floor; it was clean and new; she wondered if Clara had its companion. She looked at a discarded dress hanging up in the closet, and tried to remember to whom Clara wished it should be given. She shed no tears; nothing seemed to come near her, to touch her. She passed into her own room, dropped down on a chair, and sat staring at a water-colour sketch of Clara, till a parting sunbeam, stealing along the wall, fell on the picture, and gave a lifelike glow to cheek and lip.

'That dreadful clock!' she muttered presently. Having once noticed the measured sound which marked the slow course of heavy hours, its voice became an intolerable irritant. Throwing a black cloak round her, over the black dress which she had mechanically resumed that morning, she went out. The sun had set; there was a rosy glow over everything; it tinted the snowy pear-blossoms, and deepened the pink on the apple-blossoms; rose-coloured clouds dappled the sky north, south, and east; in the west, long streaks of gold and crimson lay quiet on a ground of pearly gray. The evening was perfectly calm, just dewy enough to bring out the full fragrance of every flower and shrub. The air was laden with odours of richly perfumed hyacinths, almond-scented laurel-blossoms, the spicy sweetness of sweet-brier, and the homely fragrance of wall-flowers. She crossed the little bridge over the brook into the orchard, and passed through a gate into the churchyard. Screened by the crumbling church and a decaying yew, she sat down amid the graves of her kindred. Near where she knelt had been laid long ago her own and Clara's mother; her father's sickly second wife and five little children, who had faded one by one, whom Margaret had nursed and tended unweariedly, but had never loved much, lay there too. Then the last buried, her father, lay there—her father, who had never shewn her much tenderness, but whom she had secretly idolised, as he had openly idolised Clara.

To-night, her heart would rapturously have wel-

comed the least-loved, the least kind of all the lost ones.

It had grown dark while Margaret sat there, but the young moon was up and shining in a cloudless sky, when, as the church clock struck nine, she rose, stiffly and feebly, and turned homeward. She found neither fire nor lamp in her sitting-room; the urn which had been put on the table at the usual hour, stood there still, quite cold. She rang for a light, and went up to her own room. As she laid her throbbing head on her pillow, she said: 'If sleep proves a faithful friend, coming to bed will be the least dreary thing in my life; but then the waking every morning to a long blank day!'

But next morning, a letter from Clara lay on the breakfast-table. It breathed the very breath of happiness, and yet many a pretty, tender phrase betrayed how the young wife's heart longed after the sister who had been for her as a mother and sister in one.

'Thank God that she is happy!' said Margaret. The simple thanksgiving was sincere enough to make her heart feel lighter; yet it was a difficult task to write the begged-for lines and not allow any expression of her own dreariness to creep into them.

'A dry, old-maidish epistle!' was the comment of Clara's husband upon the brief letter which had been elaborated with heed that no tears should fall on the paper, that no bitterness should peep out of any phrase.

It was yet early in the morning when Clara's note had been re-read many times, and the answer lay ready for the post. Long ago, when, with needle-work, nursing, and teaching, she had hardly ever had one whole hour in the day to herself, a quiet life of leisure for thought and study had been Margaret's ideal of a happy life. She remembered this now with a self-pitying smile, as she glanced at her book-shelves, and found no volume that she cared to take down.

The day passed somehow: it was not much better than yesterday, and she saw no reason why to-morrow—any to-morrow—should be. She envied the girls and women who worked in the fields. Rough, rude, dirty, and ignorant as they were, they had their daily toil, and, most of them, fathers and mothers, or husbands and children, to go home to at night. It occurred to Margaret to wonder if she could do any good among those girls and women—if she could make them less rough, rude, dirty, and ignorant; but there was a barrier to any such undertaking which seemed to her insurmountable. With her own shyness and reserve, she did not think she could enter strange houses uninvited; then, too, she had no confidence in her own powers to influence others. And why should she strive to make more like herself those whom she thought so much happier?

Margaret passed by the kitchen as she went out that evening. It was the most cheerful room in the house. Hannah and Richard, her old servants, looked as comfortable as possible, one on either side the fire, while through the window she saw their daughter and her privileged 'friend' admiring the fine double-stocks in the kitchen-garden. Margaret wandered down the orchard, down the meadows, thence to the top of the Knoll. She seated herself on a felled tree, and, as she watched the sunset, her thoughts took an unwonted direction. Margaret was thirty, and had never been 'in love.' In her youth, she had 'had no time for such nonsense.' Perhaps this was the first time that anything like tenderness had mingled with her recollection of the one lover whom she had unhesitatingly rejected so long ago! If she had loved James Grant, she would then still have rejected him, for she believed herself at that time quite indispensable to the comfort of her father's household. This lover of hers had gone abroad directly after his rejection; she had not heard of him since, and had very seldom thought of him.

No doubt, he was married, and had forgotten her long ago.

The sun had set; the primroses on which Margaret's eyes were fixed were only pale specks of light when she moved to go home.

Sitting by the fireside alone, a book she had no interest to read lying on her knees, her thoughts returned to the same subject. She wondered if James had remembered her long; she believed that the manner of her rejection might have been more gentle. She had not thought then as she thought now, that a woman ought always to be humbly grateful for affection, even when she cannot pay love for love. Margaret did not think that she could ever have loved any one more than she had loved Clara, but she had been obliged to give up the first place in Clara's affections. She thought that it must be inexpressibly sweet to have the first, best love of a faithful heart; she thought that a life spent in the service of one so loving would be inexpressibly delicious!

In her dreams that night she was a girl again. She stood by the brook on a summer evening, enjoying the fragrance of new-mown hay, and by her, with fervent face and eyes of love, stood James Grant, pleading with her in soft speech, which troubled and woke her.

#### CHAPTER II.

Farmer Hale smoked his evening pipe, sitting in the stone porch of the house of the Great Farm. The house was a gray, many-gabled structure, deeply incrustured with mosses and lichens. It was older than the Manor House, stood on a higher hillside. Without, it had a somewhat dreary look, but within it was very cozy—cool in summer, warm in winter. The yards and farm-buildings were all behind; in front, sloping to the south, was the quaint garden; on one side, a green, beneath a group of magnificent witch-elms; on the other—the eastern side—seven gigantic decaying pines clustered together, and kept imprisoned a wind-spirit, which never ceased, more or less loudly, to bemoan its fate.

The farmer's wife came out for a breath of the fresh evening air, and stood beside her good-man; the smoke from his pipe did not spoil the scent of the stocks and wall-flowers for her.

After a long, cogitative gaze at his companion's face, the farmer removed his pipe from his mouth, and shook his head.

'You must have sum 'un to help 'ee nuss him if he don't soon take a turn,' he said; 'you be growing quite nash and peaky-looking.'

Mrs Hale was gazing across the meadows towards the Manor House; when she spoke, it was apparently not much to the purpose.

'Here's Miss Woodford coming; she's crossing the high meadow. I've not set eyes on her since the wedding; she'll have been dreadful dreary, I'm thinking.'

'Ay, it's special bad for the women to live alone; I've allers said so. She with nought to do, too. She'd be a main bit happier if she had her bread to work for.'

'The Lord tries some in one way, some in another; some, seemingly, in all ways. She'd a hard time of it in Madam Woodford's life, and through the squire's sickness. They were none too well to do, neither, when there were such a many of them.'

'That's true. It was nothing but a sweet, purty face of her own Miss Clara had when the tall gentleman came south after her. Well, I'll be off; Miss Woodford don't want me.' So saying, the farmer was about to walk through the house, and into the yard by the back-door; but his wife begged him to go round by the green, lest the smoke should get upstairs and annoy the sick gentleman.

Mrs Hale met Margaret at the gate from which a



paved walk, between borders edged with London pride and gay with tulips led to the porch. Welcoming her heartily, she conducted her to the right-hand parlour, a pleasant room, with many lattices, opening south and west, on to the garden and the green, and furnished with handsome decaying oak, which some tasteless Madam Woodford had discarded from the best rooms of the Manor House.

'I should have made hold to step up and see you, and ask news of Miss Clara—Mrs Montague, I should say—but that the sick gentleman has been so bad I didn't like to leave the place,' began Mrs Hale.

'I know you are always busy,' answered Margaret absently. 'I, who have nothing to do, ought to have come to you, to tell you about Clara, and to thank you for all the good things you sent for the breakfast. I have not been well.' She looked ill, old, plain; much altered since Mrs Hale last saw her.

Mrs Hale expressed her sincere sorrow, condoled with her visitor on her loneliness, heard all she had to tell of her sister, and then went off into a long chat about her own affairs. 'The sick gentleman' was often alluded to; but it was no unusual thing for invalids to lodge at the farm, and Margaret was too listless to have any curiosity about this particular sufferer.

By and by, Mrs Hale begged to be excused for a moment; the kitchen clock warned her that it was time 'he' had his medicine. She came back with a mournful look on her pleasant face.

'Is the gentleman worse?' asked Margaret, who had looked from the open window at one particular monthly rose during the whole time of Mrs Hale's absence, and yet could not have told that Mrs Hale's roses were already in blossom.

'He's not long for this world; I'm afraid he's only come here to die,' returned Mrs Hale, brushing her hand across her eyes. 'He's too good to live, Miss Woodford, so patient and so grateful for the least kindness; and who could help being kind to him, I wonder? Let me see, it was just after Miss Clara's wedding he came; he was taken dangerously ill next day.—Miss Woodford, ma'am, she went on, after a brief pause, 'I have it in my mind to ask a favour of you: may I make so bold?'

'I shall be very glad if I can do anything for you, Mrs Hale.'

'Do you think now'—and the farmer's wife spoke coaxingly—'that you could come up now and again, of an afternoon—that's his best time—and read to the sick gentleman a bit? He's always a wearying his poor head trying to read to himself.'

Margaret looked blank, and visibly shrank from compliance.

'It's troubling you too much, and taking up your time!' Mrs Hale said regretfully.

'It is not that,' said Margaret; 'my time is of no value; but for an entire stranger! I shouldn't like to do it, Mrs Hale.'

'I am sure you would not mind him; he is quite a gentleman.'

'The gentleman might not like it—might not wish it,' said Margaret, secretly hoping such might be the case.

'May I mention that a lady I know could come and read to him now and then, and ask if he would like it? I won't mention who you are.'

Margaret said 'Yes,' because she was ashamed to say 'No.'

Mrs Hale went upstairs at once. She returned with an answer, delicately and courteously worded, expressing the invalid's gratitude for the charitable offer, and his eagerness to avail himself of it.

Mrs Hale asked Margaret to come on the next day; she had no notion of delay. As, soon after, she stood at the gate watching her guest out of sight, the farmer's wife smiled to herself in a complacent manner.

Margaret's interest had not been awakened; her homeward step was weary and listless. She wondered, just a little, if Mrs Hale's request were not a strange one; then she thought: 'I am middle-aged now; I look older than I am. I may use the privileges of mature years. I ought to be glad to be of use to any one, but it will be very disagreeable.'

She woke next morning with a sense of something impending; but a letter came from Clara and drove the matter out of her head.

Probably she would altogether have forgotten her engagement, had not a message from Mrs Hale in the course of the afternoon reminded her that she was expected. It was already rather late. She put on her shawl, bonnet, and gloves hastily, and walked fast to the farm.

Mrs Hale was on the watch.

'I am very glad you are come, ma'am,' she said. 'Sick folks are like children; it's very hard for them to give up anything that's been promised them. He'd have been terribly disappointed if you hadn't come.'

Leading the way upstairs, Mrs Hale continued: 'He has the two big south rooms. He's dressed, and on the sofa in the sitting-room to-day. He fainted right off when all was done, but he's had a good sleep since.'

Mrs Hale paused to take breath before she knocked at the door. Margaret felt very shy: she was glad to find the room dim. It was large and low; the small lattice-windows, shaded by creepers and set deep in the massive wall, did not admit much light, and the afternoon was cloudy.

A wood-fire burned on the hearth; but the head of the couch on which the invalid lay was drawn back into a recess, out of the light and heat. Margaret supposed that the stranger made a movement as if to rise, for Mrs Hale said, as she hurried to his side: 'The lady will go away, and not come again, sir, unless you lie quite quiet. We won't have no politeness, if you please—will we, ma'am?'

'I should be very sorry to cause any disturbance—that any exertion should be made on my account,' said Margaret.

When Margaret spoke, the invalid, who had closed his eyes for a moment, opened them, and fixed them on his visitor. She had turned towards the window. Mrs Hale followed her there to set a low chair and a footstool for her. The light fell on her, but she had not removed her bonnet and veil.

After a few moments—after a few courteous sentences of the invalid's had been reported to Margaret by Mrs Hale, who was close to him, and answered by Margaret with less embarrassment than she expected to feel—Margaret began to read the book which the patient had been trying to read to himself. Mrs Hale sat by him, knitting; Margaret, in the window, was at a considerable distance.

'Isn't it too hard a book, sir? You listen so eager, you'll make your head bad,' Mrs Hale said by and by, taking advantage of a pause.

'O no! But ask the lady if she is not tired or cold. Beg her to come near the fire—to say if she does not like the book.'

'I like the book, and I am quite warm enough,' said Margaret, and went on reading.

She had a clear and sweet voice, rather deep-toned for a woman's—a soothing voice, and yet the stranger did not seem to find it soothing. He moved his head from side to side restlessly, and Mrs Hale noticed that his cheeks were flushed, and that his eyes glistened.

At the next pause she rose. 'You want your tea, sir? I'll get it directly.'

'There is no hurry. Do not trouble to go down on purpose; you take so many, many journeys for me,' the invalid said faintly; then, conscious that Margaret was rising also, he added: 'Ask the lady not to

go yet. Beg her to sit nearer the fire, and to take some tea with me.'

Margaret seated herself closer to the hearth. She would have continued reading, but the stranger, sure that she must be tired, began to talk. Suddenly, the weak voice failed in the middle of a sentence.

Margaret rose, and went softly towards his couch. His eyes were closed, his head thrown back, and a deathly pallor was over his face. One moment she stood irresolute: just as she was turning to call Mrs Hale, the closed eyes opened. A glass of water stood on the table; she brought it to him; he drank, and smiled thankfully. 'Do not tell Mrs Hale. I am weak to-day; but it is nothing,' he said.

The dark, soft eyes—the only beauty of a plain, wasted face—looked up into hers with an irresistible expression of appeal and confidingness. 'Pray, come again, whatever Mrs Hale says,' he added; 'promise to do so, please.'

She supposed that he was feverish by the eagerness of his manner. As she answered, drawing back to her former position: 'I will come again if you wish it, if it does you no harm: I am glad to be of use to any one,' Margaret felt a warm glow come into her face, and was glad of the increased dimness of the room.

There was a pause. It was broken by his saying: 'I give you much trouble; but would you kindly open a window? I want to hear the thrushes in the pear-tree.'

Margaret complied, and stood beside the casement listening to a song which appeared to her unusually sweet.

'How delicious,' he said softly, 'the fragrance of the garden comes across to me! But how I long to go out! Please close the lattice now. Mrs Hale is coming, and we do not agree about fresh air.'

The room was so dusk, and they stood so far off, that they could hardly be said to exchange a smile; but yet each felt that the other smiled, and that they were no longer as strangers.

Mrs Hale entered with the tea, and Margaret tried to slip quietly away; but the invalid saw her movement.

'The gentleman thinks, ma'am, that it is too late for you to walk across the meadows alone. Mark will be proud to go with you,' Mrs Hale said.

Margaret shook her head decidedly, and departed. She enjoyed the homeward walk, the dusky fragrance, and the perfect quiet, as she had not enjoyed anything for a long time.

She thought over all that had passed at the farm; lingered out-of-doors, and forgot, till she entered the house, how dreary she was. She read that evening a book which the invalid had spoken of; it had been given her by Clara's husband a long time ago, and had remained uncut till now. She became interested, sat up late, and slept well when she went to rest.

*To be continued.*

### FALSE POSITIONS.

KING SOLOMON was a man of considerable judgment and knowledge of character, but it is doubtful whether he would have made an efficient police magistrate of our own day. The ancient Jews—unless they were very different from their descendants—were not wanting in cunning, but they must be no match for our modern London thieves. As for the famous decision of his majesty with respect to the infant and its two mothers, the threatened catastrophe would now be looked upon with the greatest unconcern, except, perhaps, by the sausage-merchants. The mothers in our courts of justice are not found, alas! contending for the honours of maternity—as to which shall take upon herself the cost and trouble of bringing up a child. On the contrary, I read in yesterday's paper that an average of one baby every seven weeks is left on the door-step of a single workhouse in the

east of the metropolis. I read in the same paper that the interesting young woman in whose arms that babe was left by its 'unnatural parent' in an excursion-train upon the Bristol Railway, is by no means so interesting as she was last week; since the guardians of the poorhouse to which she had consigned the little innocent have discovered that the young woman is its own mother, and had merely invented the romance to get it off her hands. The matter before Solomon was plain-sailing as compared with the questions that have to be decided every day at Bow Street.

Moreover, it was not complicated by policemen.

Without wishing to say anything to the general discredit of a very useful body of men, who, notwithstanding the garroters, render our streets as safe as those of any city on earth, and our houses as secure, yet it must be confessed that some of them are very hard swearers. Most men enter the witness-box with some trepidation, and with a resolute determination to stick to the bare facts of the case. Females, it is true, are not affected in a similar manner, and proceed to indulge themselves (quite innocently) in a vein of picturesque and glowing description; but the magistrate is prepared for them, and washes their evidence in his own mind until all the colour comes out of it that is not 'fast.' The amateur male witness hesitates in order to make himself sure before speaking. He talks of a fact as 'the impression on his own mind, sir,' or 'to the best of his belief.' He looks at the prisoner very hard when called upon to give evidence to his identity, and then declares that he has no 'moral doubt' about him—which is just the thing that everybody else has.

On the other hand, the professional swearer—the policeman—enters the box as though it were a place of refreshment; removes his hat, strokes his hair, smacks his lips against that dreadfully dirty little book, so that you can hear him half across the street, and then goes in at his work as it were with his coat off. 'I was a-standing, your wushup, at the south-east corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields this morning at a quarter, or it might be ten minutes, to three, when I saw the prisoner, &c. &c.' He gives a nod in the wretched man's direction, to signify that he is referring to the individual in the dock, but otherwise he might be the reader's boy in a printing-house for all the interest he seems to take in his own recital. When the prisoner dares him to identify him, he looks at him as if he were a stone-wall, and does it. Many an unjustly accused person of nervous temperament has been induced by that look and voice to consider whether there might not be something in the charge after all, just as Mr Winkle imagined, when he got the challenge at Rochester, that perhaps he might have been out the previous evening in a bottle-green coat with brass buttons, and insulted somebody, without being in the least aware of it. The magistrate of course is aware at what a frightful disadvantage a man is placed who has only a hesitating witness—brought to the court *volens volens*, and generally *volens*—to say a word or two in his favour against such testimony as this; it is evident that Midas would often dismiss the case if he dared: 'I must decide,' says he, 'by the evidence before me; you are fined ten shillings;' which, in other words, amounts to this: 'I am inclined to think that the charge is pressed too hard; but discrediting a policeman is a most dangerous matter, and half-a-sovereign, as I perceive by your appearance, is no very great loss to you.'

Excessive familiarity with the witness-box produces, if not contempt, at least considerable indifference; it is impossible that a man can give his evidence under the same moral influence for the thousandth time with which he gives it the first time. Respectable witnesses for the defence ought, therefore, to be credited in preference to policemen, and they generally

are so. In the same paper to which I have already referred, there is a remarkable case of this sort. Two policemen swearing in the most perfect accord are opposed by even a greater number of respectable persons, with respect to a matter trumpery in itself, but most important as involving these contradictions. As the affair is undecided, it would be improper to comment upon it here; the magistrate has very rightly declined to adjudicate summarily, 'it being evident that the grossest perjury has been committed either on one side or the other.' It behoves him, indeed, and it behoves every man to look most narrowly into such matters as these; for if once the police get into general discredit as witnesses, the evil to the public will be incalculable. Not only may it be rendered unsafe for respectable *Paterfamilias* to walk home from his dinner-party with a cigar, or to mention aloud to his companion the name of Garibaldi, but the honest poor will get to confuse Authority with Oppression—a terrible case of Misidentification indeed!

Accidents, of course, will happen in the best regulated police divisions. A gentleman who left the house of the present writer on Monday night last (or it might be even on Tuesday morning), in the social position of a barrister, found himself, within thirty-five minutes of his departure, in a police station, under the gravest suspicion of burglary. This young gentleman, attired in the height of fashion, fond of music and the fine arts, and the friend of a literary person of distinction, was transformed, I say, within that very short period, into a member of one of the most dangerous classes of society. One can scarcely conceive a more sudden reverse of fortune. At 1.30\*, 'or it might be at 1.45' (as the policeman, no doubt, subsequently observed), he was waking the echoes of Westbourne with his polished-leather boots, and looking out for nothing more criminal than a cab, when he was collared by two policemen.

He naturally inquired, but with much elegance of diction, what they wanted.

They replied, with grimness, that they wanted him; that they had had their eye upon him [he confessed he shuddered at this] for weeks, and that now they were going to take him to his 'pal,' whom they had caught only half an hour previously.

'My good friends,' said he (with affectionate openness, as to the Common Juries), 'you have made a little mistake here.'

'A werry, werry little one,' returned one of the myrmidons of the law sarcastically.

'You looks like a mistake, don't you?' remarked the other.

This ironical observation, which might otherwise have appeared complimentary, was accompanied by a peculiar application of the speaker's fingers to the nape of my friend's neck, which had the effect of accelerating his speed. He had breath enough, however, left in him to observe that he was a personal friend of Sir Richard Mayne's—a statement which kept his captors in the highest good-humour until they reached the station-house. They paid him the compliment of saying that, for 'bounce,' they had never seen his equal; and, indeed, he has a great deal of personal confidence, to which, however, his merits fully entitle him.

No sooner did the inspector set eyes upon my friend, than he broke out into the most profuse apologies. His myrmidons, he explained, had been misled by the excessive lateness of the hour; the 'pal' of an already captured 'crackman' was expected (though not by invitation) at a house in Westbourne Terrace between one and two A.M. 'That was how it was, bless you!' So the man of 'bounce' was suffered to depart.

\* A discussion upon the Duality of Being had detained him at my house until that hour.

This, of course, was a case of pure accident, which might have occurred (and did so) to the most innocent, fashionable, and talented of human beings. But there are cases of police misadventure, I am afraid, with which accident has nothing to do.

A gentleman of the highest respectability, who has dined, but has not wined to any undue extent, is humming aloud as he walks home. You may not spin a top on the pavement, but you may hum, I suppose. Policeman X 7045, or so, thinks not, and expresses that opinion, with some gruffness, to the offending party.

'You police,' retorts the wayfarer, quoting indignantly from some letter of *Paterfamilias* in the *Times*, 'are always busy where you are not wanted, and never to be found when you are required.'

'Never to be found when we are required, eh!' cries X 7045, or so; 'we will soon see that;' and he executes a peculiar bar with his lips, probably from the air of *Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad*.

Immediately, as a pigeon for bread-crumbs, swoops down from some unseen station X 7046. They take the astonished gentleman arm and arm, and proceed to lead him away. The captive being powerful, and strengthened by recent food, 'floors' one of them by a movement of the elbow; but the next instant they have their staves out, and he has cause to regret the blow he has struck for liberty; they take him to the station-house, where the officials decline to let him write word of this unprecedented misfortune to his family, or to send out for bail. The next morning he finds the two Xs in the witness-box, giving evidence with the most admirable unanimity.

'The prisoner was very drunk, your wushup, was in company with four disorderly persons of the opposite sex, and assaulted us most savagely in the execution of our duty.'

The look of astonished horror with which the prisoner receives this intelligence does not fail to be perceived by the magistrate.

'Now, what does the inspector say to this? In what state did the prisoner appear to be in, Mr Lynx, when you took the charge?'

'Well, sir, he was excited—certainly' ('I should rather think I was,' interpolates the accused person); 'but I cannot say that he was exactly in liquor.'

The prisoner states his own case lucidly, and with every appearance of truth. Of his respectability, there is no doubt. His habits are declared by a host of friends to be quite incompatible with the present charge. The magistrate, however, observes: 'You must be guilty, sir, unless there has been the grossest perjury committed by these two men. I will either fine you, or, if you wish the matter to be fully investigated, I will remand the case.'

'I wish the case to be remanded by all means,' replies the accused person.

Now, between this and the next hearing the captive, now on bail of course, unhappily takes counsel of a gentleman in the law accustomed to defend 'after-dinner' cases, and the results of illusion among the higher classes.

'You may be innocent or not,' says he ('I am innocent,' interposes the Bailed One); 'but in either case, the magistrate must abide by the evidence. No good can possibly result from protracting these proceedings. You had better confess that there may have been something in it, and just apologise. Then you will pay your pound, and it will be all over.'

The weak-minded Bailed One gives in to this insidious advice. Upon the next hearing of the case, he remarks (doubtless with considerable sullenness), that 'perhaps he had better apologise, and be fined.'

'What!' cries the magistrate with very just indignation; 'you wish to apologise, after having charged these trustworthy persons with the worst crime that people in their situation can commit, and that with an air of innocence that almost deceived myself. No,



sir; you shall not be fined. You shall go to prison for a week.' And the magistrate was as good as his word.

Now, of the innocence of the gentleman accused, his friends are as certain as they can be of anything that they have not witnessed with their own eyes. Steps have been taken to convict the unanimous Xs of perjury, and perhaps the judgment will be reversed as far as possible. But in the meantime, the victim has been to prison, and has had his hair cut as Mr Truefit never cut it. I do not know the unfortunate gentleman, but I am acquainted with those who do, and their opinion of the testimony of the police has sunk to zero. To say the least of it, the matter looks very doubtful, particularly when taken in connection with similar cases which have been numerous of late at more than one police-office. Now, there should be no doubt whatever about such matters as these.

It will not be supposed that any writer in this Journal wishes to weaken public confidence in the administration of the law; but perhaps it will be well to conclude this paper with a False Position of a totally different kind to those I have spoken of, and one which illustrates the excessive difficulties which the police have to encounter, and the innocent prosperous garb in which their enemies (and ours) are often found.

Let the scene be the South-western Railway station in the Waterloo Road, at 6 p.m. in October, with the two excursion-trains and the Weymouth train coming in within a few minutes of one another, as usual, and with a great insufficiency of cabs and porters. You cannot see much of the scene because of the fog, but what is visible is calculated to terrify and confuse the strongest mind which has so much as a carpet-bag to look after. Conceive the position, then, of a country clergyman's wife sitting upon her luggage, as though it were eggs, and waiting for her husband, who has plunged into that awful tunnel (contrary to the regulations, of course, but what is to be done?) in the desperate hope of getting a cab. He has got their luggage together after a struggle of eight-and-forty minutes in the dark, and it has acquired an additional value in his eyes from the expenditure of force and patience in its acquisition. 'Be sure, Laura Isabella,' are his last words, 'do not leave that luggage for one instant, and spread out your crinoline so as to cover it all.' It is the very first time that he has observed crinoline to be of the smallest use.

Laura Isabella sits hard and fast, amid the babel and dimness, with her eyes fixed upon the mouth of the tunnel, and with a mind shaken to its foundations indeed, but still determined to perform her duty: reason has fled, but instinct still abides. She will perish rather than surrender so much as a hat-box to any but her lord and master; for, however it may be at the vicarage, in a scene of this sort, she gladly acknowledges the pre-eminence of the male.

'Madam, I think you are sitting on my luggage,' enunciates a female voice of great sweetness, but of determination also. The speaker is a lady in well-chosen travelling costume and of a distinguished appearance.

Laura Isabella is dumb with amazement at her impudence.

'Will you be so very good,' adds the lady, 'as to move?'

'Move!' exclaims the vicar's wife; 'never! My name is Soanso, and my luggage is all labelled with that name.'

'My name is also Soanso,' replies the lady majestically. 'You had better get up before I call a porter, or perhaps I shall also call a policeman.'

Laura Isabella rises just to convince herself that she is awake and capable of locomotion; she examines the treasure that she has been set to guard; she recognises again her own travelling-trunk (bought

when her *trousseau* was bought, and therefore with a certain sentiment about its leathern sides), her bonnet-box (with that novelty from Buttercup Parva within it, which to-morrow is to make quite a sensation at the Exhibition), and the Rev. Augustus's much smaller portmanteau, with the spare sermon she has tucked in it at the last moment, in case the Archbishop of Canterbury should require him to preach in Westminster Abbey. The sight of these things reassures her, and she is prepared to fight to the uttermost—with one of her own sex. But see, here is a porter (found by some miraculous means) come to aid and abet her enemy, and he perhaps but a precursor of the threatened policeman. The situation grows terrible indeed.

'This woman' (referring to Laura Isabella) 'persists in sitting upon my luggage, porter;' drones the lady; 'it is all marked with the name of Soanso, and yet she won't get off.'

'Porter,' cries Laura Isabella, in agonised tones, 'you are going to do a dreadful wrong: the luggage is my very own. Oh, where is Augustus? What can he—can he be at?'

'I do not give this person in charge,' continues the lady, 'because I believe her to be a lunatic. But in order to convince you at once, I will call my footman. George—a most accurate serving-man with irreproachable calves appears with the suddenness of a Jack-in-the-box—' is this my luggage?'

'Certainly, ma'am; leastways, yours and master's. The brougham is close at hand.'

A neat carriage with a fine stepping bay, and an immaculate coachman, was within a few yards of them, and the coachman drew up at his comrade's signal.

The porter had had a chivalrous feeling for Laura Isabella in distress, but he was human after all: the footman and the brougham were too much for him: he shouldered the luggage, and the footman shouldered Laura Isabella out of the way. The brougham with its wicked inmate drove off with the nuptial travelling-trunk and all the rest of the plunder; and when, half an hour afterwards, the Rev. Augustus came out of the tunnel with his four-wheeled cab, he might just as well have brought a Hansom, for there was nothing to carry away save Laura Isabella herself.

Now, here there were a number of people in a False Position without any fault of the police.

## ROCKALL FISHERY.

At a time when skill and science have taken possession of almost every realm of nature, and in many cases exhausted her stores in administering to the wants and luxuries of man, any new field of enterprise that offers cannot but be eagerly seized upon and investigated; especially, too, is this the case in so vital and essential a particular as anything that promises an increase in the source of our food-supplies. The surface of the earth, and much of its subterranean treasure, are now worked to the best advantage by man's restless ingenuity. It so happens, however, that an art older than husbandry, and an element even older than the land, have never yet had equal attention bestowed upon the means of expressing their full contribution to our general wants. In the depths of the mighty ocean there are gold-fields, from which might be drawn as many millions as ever came from the mines of Golconda of old, or California of to-day. As in those subterranean discoveries, however, so is it in the sub-oceanic; not thinly scattered, but in veins and beds lie the precious treasures, until discovered by chance.

In the August of last year, a discovery of this kind seemed actually to have been made. The captain of a smack returning from an unsuccessful voyage to

Greenland, and crossing the North Atlantic in fifty-seven degrees thirty-five minutes north latitude, and thirteen degrees forty-one minutes west longitude, accidentally let down his lines as he passed along that track. No sooner were they down than one or two fish of immense size were hooked and brought on board. Down again went the lines, and up came more fish immediately. Again, again, and again, as fast as the men could pull in their lines, were their pains rewarded, until their success was only limited by the extent of their material on board, and the physical strength of the crew. In short, in an incredibly brief space of time, fourteen tons of large beautiful cod-fish were taken, valued at ten pound per ton; and having exhausted their salt and other stores, the delighted fishermen set sail for Westray, in Orkney, where they astonished the natives with their marvellous narrative.

The place where this successful fishing was made is on a sand-bank of nearly one hundred miles in length by forty in breadth, and from out of which rises to about eighteen or twenty feet high one solitary rock of a peculiar form. Rockall, as this round mass is named, is shaped somewhat like a haystack, with a flattened top, but assuming every variety of appearance according to the point from which it is approached. The existence of the rock and sand-bank was not altogether unknown to mariners, but lying out of the common track of most vessels, was known only to few. In 1811, Captain Basil Hall came across the place, and landed two of his men, who, it is said, scrambled to the top of the rock to make some observations; but in the meantime, caught by one of the currents, the vessel moved away from the place, and a fog coming on, the men were completely lost for a number of hours, in which perilous situation they remained until the fog cleared away. It does not appear, however, that any fishing was then attempted, or that anything was actually known about the place as a fishing-ground until last year. Great was therefore the excitement among the Orkney islanders on hearing of the discovery; and though the season was late, two or three other vessels went out and came back with similar success. The fearful storms of a northern winter cut off for that season any further attempts, and so matters remained during six months. Meanwhile, however, though nothing could be done at sea, a company was formed on land, and means organised for commencing operations during the spring.

It was now that some doubts began to be insinuated as to the soundness and reality of the speculation. Like many others interested in what appeared so valuable a discovery, the writer of this paper, in May last, went down to Westray, in the Orkneys, to see with his own eyes, and hear with his own ears, what might be the true state of the case. Arriving in the bay during the night, we found, next morning, another smack which had meanwhile come into the bay. This vessel had just come in from Rockall, and I cannot well describe the anxiety we felt to know what luck she had had; nor was that anxiety at all disagreeably removed by the announcement that fifteen tons of fish were on board. No doubt, this great success was somewhat modified by the fact of the vessel's having been out from Westray five weeks; but, again, considering the boisterous and unfavourable state of the weather, hardly anything could be better. Busy, therefore, was the preparation now urged forward by our crew, and that of other vessels bent on the same expedition. Two days more elapsed, and another smack arrived, bringing ten tons of most beautiful fish, but those also caught over a space of five weeks. Still, again, the weather was an ample reason for the slowness of the adventure, and we did not cease to hope that fairer seasons would bring in speedier returns.

During the months of May, June, and great part of

July, the weather was certainly most unpropitious for fishing operations. On what may probably have been in London a beautiful day, with a slight refreshing breeze, over the surface of the wild North Atlantic the fitful storm was howling, and along the rock-bound coast of Orkney immense billows were rolling in and dashing against the shore. Standing on some lonely promontory, as I often did, and, far as the eye could reach, seeing nothing but mountain upon mountain of angry surf-tossed waves, and knowing that three hundred miles away, far from shelter, and exposed to their wild fury, were a number of tiny vessels riding out that tempest, and watching for a lull to begin their operations, all thought of success in the object of their voyage gave way within me to an anxious desire for the safety of the poor men thus imperilling their lives. Still some fine days would intervene, and occasionally we heard of vessels entering other harbours with several tons of fish from Rockall. But long and anxious were now the lookings-out for the arrival of some of the company's vessels, of which so much was expected. At length, like a speck on the horizon appeared the *William*, the pioneer of the absent fleet, while painfully intense was the anxiety of the managing director, as the vessel neared the land and moved into Westray Bay. Up went the signal-flag from our friend Dr Dawson's house, to welcome back at least the intrepid men who had ventured across those awful seas to solve the problem of fish or no fish at Rockall. Nor did the answer at first appear unsatisfactory; eight tons of fish—though in five weeks out—certainly not bad, considering the weather. But alas! another and a more serious drawback had now to be narrated: those eight tons were not all the *William's* catching, but a collection from other two vessels; and, moreover, for the first time now began to be insinuated the unwelcome truth, that *even in calm weather* but few fish were taken. A few days more brought home another smack with two-and-a-half tons, also about five weeks out; soon followed by another, the writer's own luckless venture, with the miserable take of *one half ton!* Point-blank was the assertion now made by the captain of this vessel, that no fish were taken even in the finest weather. But, if possible, still worse than even this remained behind; one vessel equipped in the most thorough and efficient manner, having an energetic captain, and the most experienced fishermen in Westray on board—and a great advantage it is to have men who *can* fish, simple as the process may appear—came in after a five weeks' voyage from Westray to Rockall with less than *one ton!* Sorry am I also to add, that my share of this loss was even greater than in the other. Having, therefore, had considerable personal interest at stake in the success of these operations, I am enabled to say from experience, that for last season, at least, the Rockall fishing was on the whole a failure. So impressed was I with this fact, too, that on the return of this last vessel, I ordered her home to London, at the same time remanding another to Farøe, where also the company's manager despatched his fleet for the rest of the season.

Still, under all the circumstances, I should not like absolutely to pronounce against Rockall. To settle that question satisfactorily, I think some more definite knowledge is required regarding the habits of the cod-fish. Are they migratory or not? If the former, then probably autumn and winter might again find them in abundance at Rockall, as when Captain Rhodes came among them. It was then getting late in the season. By letters received but lately from Westray, I am informed that some good fishing was made at Rockall in the latter part of September. Thus doubt and uncertainty stand at the entrance of the whole question of these deep-sea fishings. There are strong indications leading to the conclusion, that winter is the best season for the

cod in deep waters; but as that entails a heavy outlay of capital in fitting out large vessels with greatly improved fishing-gear, the truth, if truth it be, is not of much immediate value.

The habits and movements of the cod are not much more unintelligible for the present than are those of the smack-masters. Notwithstanding the great and unquestionable success of one of them at the end of last season, he at the beginning of this year, instead of following up that success, as would naturally be expected by a renewed visit to Rockall, went right off to Greenland, and never visited the place at all. Another of the 'discoverers' fished elsewhere till about the end of June. Meeting with him one evening at Dr Dawson's after that bootless cruise, I was assured by him that next day he would again be on his way to Rockall; yet no sooner was he out of the bay, than his vessel's head put north about, and off he went to Farøe. Another no less significant fact remains to be stated. The two principal fish-merchants of Westray, also smack-owners, and intimately acquainted with the whole business, did certainly, at the beginning of the season, send vessels to Rockall, one of which was the identical smack that lay alongside of ours with fifteen tons of fish on our arrival in the bay; but in July all their vessels were sent out to Shetland, Farøe, and Greenland, and so far as I am aware, not one went back to Rockall for the rest of the season.

On the other hand, there are two or three causes that might partially induce this behaviour, as well as a failure of fish at Rockall. At that place, in stormy weather, no shelter can be had nearer than St Kilda, some one hundred and thirty-six miles distant, and a storm at Rockall is a storm indeed, enough to appal the oldest and hardiest sailor. Even, therefore, though good fishing were expected, it is something in the mind of a captain to overcome this repugnance. Whilst at Farøe and Greenland, shelter can be readily obtained, and moderate fishing may also be depended upon. Something, too, there is in the use and wont of going to the same old-accustomed places; and, besides, no small amount of merchandise is there carried on, if report speaks truly, that adds to their profits as much as do their most successful fishings.

On the whole, taking all the circumstances into account, it is evident that this year's fishing at Rockall has been a failure, but only as regards the high expectations formed of the place; and it would be premature absolutely to pronounce against it from this limited trial, while possibly next year may entirely redeem its character.

#### A RIVAL TO CRICKET.

WHEN the English residents at Boulogne played a cricket-match for the amusement of the Duchesse de Berry, that lady, after being spectator of some half-dozen innings with extreme *ennui*, sent a gentleman of her retinue to the chief player to beg to know when the game was going to begin, as 'Madame la Duchesse etait terriblement ennuyée.' The duchess, good lady, had taken all the desperate fielding and batting of two mortal hours for mere preliminary sport; a prelude to a more exciting and violent competition.

The duchess 'hit a blot' in our national game, when she sent that annoying message. Cricket, like all other things, has its defects. In the first place, it does not give the player sufficient employment. There are long intervals when a man has nothing to do but stare at the grass, and hope that the ball will come his way. The worse player a cricketer is, the shorter are his innings, and the less he has to do in fielding. On a very cold or very hot day, an hour's fielding is dull work, especially to the men furthest from the wicket. Another drawback of cricket is, that the dress and implements grow daily more expensive; and

the greatest disadvantage of all is, that it cannot be played in winter, which is just the time most adapted for running and violent exercise.

Now, Lacrosse, the national game of Canada, has none of these defects. It can be played even on the snow, and as well in winter as in summer. It can be played by any number of persons. The ground needs no preparation. The materials for the game are cheap and simple. It employs nearly every player at once, and is capable of infinite varieties, while it furnishes opportunities for the greatest skill and agility.

Lacrosse is a game of extreme antiquity, and was borrowed from the American Indians by the Canadians. It is mentioned by Charlevoix, that early French traveller, who saw the Algonquins playing it on the shores of the St Lawrence, somewhere between Quebec and The Three Rivers. It was at a great game of lacrosse, between three Indian tribes—the Shawnees, the Ottawas, and the Delawares—that an attempt was once made to surprise Fort Detroit. Catlin describes thousands of men joining in the game.

A few years ago, the young men of Montreal learned the game from the Troquois of Caughnawaga, and already the Beaver Club of Montreal boast of players who can beat the Indians who taught them.

Lacrosse is a game so wild and exciting, so varied, and so dramatic, that it interests the spectator as much as the player, and this cannot be so truly said of any other game. It is also a simple game, and one easily understood. Above all, in lacrosse the muscles of the body are brought into exertion equally and at the same time, and there is no danger of losing an eye, or splitting off a thumb. Unlike cricket, lacrosse is a game suited for girls, and might be introduced into girls' schools with great advantage, as the crosse bat is scarcely heavier than a battledore, and there is plenty of healthy running, without any danger of blows.

Lacrosse is generally played by twelve competitors on a side. The players wear flannel shirts and caps, belts or sashes, and light shoes or deer-skin moccasins, which leave the feet unconstrained and pliant.

The crosse, or bat, requires careful description. It may be either of ash or hickory; the former bends easier, the latter is stronger. It is generally about three feet long, but its size and weight may be proportioned to the height and strength of the player. It is bent into a shape resembling an unbarbed fish-hook or a bishop's crozier; a net of catgut, or strings of moose-skin, is then strained across the curve to the width of a racket-bat. The netted surface is made rather baggy in the centre, in order to better catch the ball and carry it when required. The ball used at lacrosse is of solid India-rubber, as it can be thrown further, and is harder to stop than the less elastic sponge-ball. The ground needs no preparation, but it is better when level, and where the grass is short and stones are few.

The goals through which the ball has to be driven are generally about six feet high, and consist of poles bearing coloured flags, placed about six feet apart. The rival goals should face each other, and be about half a mile apart. The game consists in a struggle of the one party to pass the ball through the goal of the other. The party that first drives the ball through the opposite goal is victorious.

The excitement and fun consist in the alternate attack and defence. If there are twenty-four players present, twelve for each side, the two 'captains,' or leading-men, toss up for the first pick. They then choose their men, and post them over the field, selecting for each his place according to age, strength, skill, and peculiar faculty.

The following rules are enforced: 'No swiping' allowed. No tripping or holding your adversary. No throwing the ball with the hand; though in a



struggle, and when a player is surrounded, it may be kicked with the foot. No picking up the ball with the hand, except in extreme cases, as when it gets into a pool, or in a sand-hole. After every game the players shall change sides. If a ball flung at the goal is caught by the crosse of the goal-keeper, but still breaks in or falls in, the game is still won by the attacking-party.

There are many ways of posting your men, according as you are a cautious or an impetuous captain, more aggressive or more defensive: some leaders run their men in a straight wall across the goal; others cluster half their men round the flags, and send the rest afield. Others leave their men to take their own positions, and to trust to the instinct of the moment. The over-cautious captain, who hoards his men too fondly round the fortress of the goal, generally saves himself for a time, but makes little progress towards victory till he grows more adventurous. The over-rash player, on the other hand, who leaves his home scantily guarded, is always in danger even in moments of success, if the enemy break from him and make a dash on his home.

The twelve men of each side consist of six field-men, ordinary field hands, and six more expert players, to whom the places of honour are reserved. These six are thus subdivided: The *goal-keeper*, who stands cool and imperturbable, to ward off the ball from the little gateway between the flags. *Point*, who should be a skilful checker in dangerous moments, stands twelve feet in front of him. *Cover-point*, who should be a very good player, should never leave his post except to cautiously push a palpable advantage. The *home-men*, stand near the enemy's goal, to pass the ball quickly in when thrown up to them; they should be specially prompt, yet cool men. The *facers* are the two players who begin the game by standing in front of each other, half-way between the goals, and 'three' being counted, trying which by strength or art can obtain the ball. Sometimes it is thrown up and struck at. The 'dodges' at this moment are numerous. Some twist the ball between their legs and the man behind them; others press the ball away by main force. A common method is as 'three' is cried to suddenly turn your back on your adversary, and giving your crosse a twist, to send the ball to your centre man.

The moment of this duel is one of the most beautiful in the game. Every man is standing silent, ready and anxious, more like statues than men; but the instant the ball starts in the air, there is a rush of athletic men, and a whirl of bats, which never ceases, but only grows wilder and fiercer, till the ball is passed between the flag-wands.

The ball in lacrosse should seldom be rudely struck, only thrown and tipped. The good player's object is to catch it as soon as possible in the bag of his net, and if he is fleet enough, or is a swift runner and dodger, to carry it at once through the goal; but as this is rather difficult with twelve opponents, checking him, crossing him, beating at his bat, and waiting to snap him at every wind and turn, the true play is to throw the ball on to the nearest or most accessible and least surrounded man of his party. As it is part of the game to strike the ball that an opponent is carrying to the goal out of his crosse, it requires great practice before you learn how to avoid these blows, and how to catch and carry the ball safest and in the quickest way between the flags.

The skilful player can catch the ball at full flight, by holding his crosse almost perpendicular; then by a dip and rise again he turns the crosse to a horizontal position, and runs off with the ball towards the goal. When closely pursued by 'checkers,' the good player throws the ball at once with care and good aim to the nearest or most accessible man of his party, who nurses it, passes it on, or runs with it, as the case may require.

The 'dodging' or avoiding the competitors who would stop you, or take the ball from you, and the 'checking' or stopping the dodger, are the two most subtle, varied, and amusing branches of the game. It is wonderful what room there is in lacrosse for invention, ingenuity, artifice, and dexterity. An Indian dodger will put up his crosse perpendicularly, and then, by a dip and horizontal turn, catch and run off with the swiftest ball; or he will bear the ball to the ground, and catch it after it bounces; or he will catch it between his feet, or under his arms, and toss it on to his crosse, and then run. If closely pursued, the good player throws the ball back over the checker's head to his nearest friend, or he will wave his crosse to and fro to escape the blow of his opponent, or keep whirling round ready for a bolt, or will pretend to fall, and then to rise and dart off on the checker's weakest side; or he keeps changing his crosse from hand to hand, and parrying his opponent's blows with the disengaged hand.

The checker is, however, generally too much for the dodger, unless he has a swift pair of legs. The checker must never let the dodger pass him with the ball, but snatch it from him before he has time to throw, or at least before he has time to throw judiciously or between the flags. He must learn all possible feints, and anticipate every movement of his antagonist. If the dodger has his back towards the checker, the latter must slip his crosse over the dodger's head, and strike the ball from him, or tip it, if possible, into his own crosse; or he can bear up his arm, or tip the end of his rival's bat, and then directly the ball falls, run and lift it off towards one of his own party, who, if unattacked, can bear it off between the flags.

The goal-keeper must be specially quick of eye, serpentine in body, and cool of head, without which qualifications he will either lose the game for his side, or receive some injury from the ball. He must never think of special players, but keep his eye undeviatingly fixed on the ball. He must beware of the dodger throwing the ball between his legs. When he can get a good cut at the ball, he must learn to strike it with the wood-work of his crosse. He must always tip the ball away to the side of the goal, as otherwise the enemy in front might instantly drive it home by a return-blow. There are times when the ball is coming in, but far above the flags, when it is better to let it pass, as otherwise it might be caught and sent in by a straight throw of one of the enemy's advanced-guard.

The player who would excel at lacrosse must not mind an occasional blow on the head or fingers, and if he does, must wear cricket-gloves and a thick cap. He must also constantly practise running and dodging. He should run on uneven and even ground, and up and down hill, especially the latter. He must learn to do the mile in as much less than ten minutes, and the six miles in as much less than the hour as possible. A quarter of a mile in a minute, or a mile in five minutes, is good running.

As a game, I rank lacrosse far above cricket or golf. It does not require attendants and special ground, like golf, and it boasts more uninterrupted amusement and more simultaneous competition than cricket. The materials, too, are cheaper, and you require no 'hog-in-armour' costume. It is more varied, more ingenious, more subtle than cricket, and, above all, it can be played in all seasons of the year without danger, expense, or preparation. No marquee required, no grass rolling, no expensive bats or balls, no spiked shoes, and no padded leggings to preserve you from the cannon-shots of fast bowlers, who seem determined to maim or lame somebody; above all, there is not that tiresome and wearisome waiting for the innings. The whole twenty-four men have their innings simultaneously, and have both an equal chance and an equal certainty of amusement and employment; while in cricket a beginner gets perhaps ten strokes at a ball, and that is all in the whole

game. I admit the pleasure of the good swipe in cricket, the excitement of the runs, the delight of blocking a treacherous slow ball, the rapture of catching out a good player, and the feverish anxiety of a close-run game, but still I hold that cricket cannot hold a candle to lacrosse for variety, ingenuity, and interest.

The last time I saw it played was in a fine green meadow outside Montreal, not far from the Haunted House, at the foot of a hill from which the fine view is obtained. The shining and uncovered steeples were hid from sight: we were among trees slightly crimsoned with the October frosts. The young Beaver Club of Montreal was playing a party of Indians, who had just arrived by steamer from some village near the Rapids of the St Lawrence. The Montreal striplings were dressed in flannel shirts and trousers, and had donned scarlet boating-caps and belts. The Indians were dark-skinned and older men, with broad chests and thin, sinewy limbs. They wore feather head-dresses and ornamented loin-clothes, and moved over the field with a restless panther-like freedom. They expressed little pleasure at their double victory, and their stolid stoical features fixed like those of bronze statues.

It was marvellous to see, as the ball for the first flew up into the air, these statues spring into life instantly. The field was dotted with groups of struggling figures, now running into jostling knots, now fanning out in swift lines like skirmishers before a grand army. Every now and then there would break away from the rest some sinewy subtle runner, who, winding and twisting like a serpent, would dash between the eager ranks of his rivals, avoiding every blow, now stooping, now leaping, now turning, quick as a greyhound, and artful as a fox; and then as the ball was shot between the crimson flags of the Montreal men, the Indians would give a war-yell that echoed again.

I only trust that some English country gentleman, who is fond of field-sports, and has a wish to increase the honest and healthy outdoor pleasures of his over-worked countrymen, only just awakening to a sense of the importance of gymnastic exercises, will introduce this delightful and exciting game into Great Britain, where it would soon become a formidable rival to cricket, which is itself only a *parennu* of the last two hundred years. It could be played on any of our suburban commons, and the bat could easily be procured from Canada, or made here from a good model.

#### THE WRECK REGISTER FOR 1861.

THERE have arrived and departed during the year 1861 no less than 267,770 vessels from British ports, manned by more than a million and a half of sailors. Of these vessels, 1494 have been wrecked, and of these men 884 have perished by drowning. As our shipping increases, the number of wrecks increases in even greater proportion. The fearful gales of January, February, and November caused the disasters of last year to exceed the average of the last six years by 260. Seven-twelfths of all the casualties happened to ships of the collier class, and were owing in most cases to their total unseaworthiness, or the bad look-out kept by their crews. Very few ships over 1000 tons came to much harm. Ten wrecks took place in a perfectly smooth sea, 14 in light airs, 51 in light breezes, 146 in moderate breezes, 320 in strong breezes, 66 in moderate gales, 350 in strong gales, 311 in 'whole' gales, 102 in storms, and 52 in hurricanes. Nearly half these wrecks took place among vessels in the home and coasting trade, but commanded by men not required by law to have certificates of competency.

The estimated total loss for the year exceeds one million sterling!

'The accompanying roll of the loss of life on British

shores and waters during the past twelve years will be perused with melancholy interest. The districts are thus classified:

	Lives lost.
Farn Islands to Flamborough Head, . . .	670
Flamborough Head to the North Foreland, . . .	1063
North Foreland to St Catherine's Point, . . .	514
St Catherine's Point to Start Point, . . .	82
Start Point to the Land's End, . . .	460
Land's End to Hartland Point, including Scilly, . . .	353
Hartland Point to St David's Head, . . .	473
St David's Head and Carnsore Point to Lambay . . .	969
Island and Skerries, Anglesey, . . .	1597
Skerries and Lambay to Fair Head and Mull of Cantire, . . .	257
Cape Wrath to Buchan Ness, . . .	280
Buchan Ness to Farn Islands, . . .	922
All other parts of the coast, . . .	7645
Total lives lost, . . .	7645

This fearful list tells us, indeed, that man cannot avert the storm, nor prevent the occurrences of wreck and drowning; but he can do much to mitigate those calamities. Although, as we have said, nearly nine hundred men have perished at sea during the last year, yet *four thousand six hundred and twenty-four* were saved from the waters; very many of these by the boats of the National Life-boat Institution—a society for which we have more than once invoked the good offices of our readers.

#### THE MOANING SEA.

With her white face full of agony,  
Under her dripping locks,  
How the wretched, restless Sea to-day  
Moans to the cruel rocks.

Helplessly in her great despair  
She shudders on the sand;  
And the weeds are gone from her tangled hair,  
And the shells from her listless hand.

'Tis a sorrowful sight to see her lie,  
With her beating, heaving breast,  
Here, where the rock has cast her off,  
Sobbing herself to rest.

Alas, alas! for the foolish sea,  
Why was there none to say:  
'The wave that strikes on the heartless stone,  
Must break, and fall away.'

Why could she not have known that this  
Would be her fate at length;  
That the hand, unheld, must slip at last,  
Though it cling with love's own strength!

For now, too late, she has learned the truth,  
Which none who learn forget—  
And this is the best that she can do  
With the future left her yet:

To rise, and wear on her face a smile,  
Though her life be ebbing out;  
And she have not even the wretched hope,  
Born of a wretched doubt.

For there is no pity for grief like hers,  
But only scorn and blame;  
And so, she must come to her feet again,  
And hide from the world her shame.

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